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Event Report

on

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

on

"INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY"

Organised

by

Department of Political Science Jamia Millia Islamia

4-5 February, 2015

The Department of Political Science, Jamia Millia Islamia, in collaboration with Indian Council of Social Science Research and Indian Council of World Affairs, organized an International Conference on India's Foreign Policy on February 4 and 5 in the Tagore Hall of the varsity. The keynote address was presented by Dr. E. Sridharan, Academic Director at the University of Pennsylvania Institute for the Advanced Study of India, New Delhi, engaging with the question about "**What Kind of Power will India Be?**" The address situated India in the current world order and also looked at its likeliness to graduate from where it is now to higher up in the hierarchy of powers. Speaking about India's place in the hierarchy of powers, Dr. Sridharan said, "India does not fit into the superpower or great power category because its ability to dominate in its region is limited; it is a constrained power. It is not a regional leader by consent but only by its relative size." He highlighted that while India would draw closer to becoming a leading player in world politics, but "its power will be limited with significant constraints. And therefore it will be very difficult to make the transition into a great power status even if India has revived or sustained high rate of growth, because there are certain conversion problems in converting economic or military capabilities." He went on to state that India lacks power projection capabilities and is unlikely to make transition into a superpower but "if it could induce band wagon effect towards itself it could become a bridging power to great countries."

The inaugural session of Day 1 "**India and the World: Past Traditions, New Directions**" was chaired by Dr. Radha Kumar, Director-General Delhi Policy Group and the speakers included Prof. S.D. Muni, Distinguished Fellow at the Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis, Ambassador Satyabrata Pal, Former Diplomat and former member of the National Human Rights Commission and Pramit Pal Chaudhuri, Foreign Affairs Editor Hindustan Times. S. D. Muni started with highlighting the traditions of India's Foreign Policy, stating that "For tracing the roots of India's foreign policy, we need to look into the evolution of the Indian State… Indian State is a civilizational state, plural in nature" and that it would be wrong to recognize Indian State as a Hindu State. He further talked about India's rich civilizational historyhaving "given India a soft power which has abysmally remained unharnessed". He concluded by adding that in order to look at India's foreign policy at any time, two important factors must be kept in mind- the grandeur vision of India, and the constraints of development, security and status deficits. Amb. Satyabrata Pal, in his address, touched upon the problems that the

Ministry of External Affairs faced and how these problems constrained India's Foreign Policy. He argued, "the part of the problem lies in the fact that those who devised the Foreign Policy of India at the time when India became independent, they had absolutely no experience of what it needs to construct or develop foreign relations with an external power". He went on to talk of how only princely states had some limited experience of developing relations with foreign countries at the time of independence but "the irony lies in the fact that these Princely States which were the only reservoir of some expertise on Foreign Policy formulation were completely ignored". Journalist Pramit Pal began his address on a lighter note by stating "India never advertises its capacities" referring to commonwealth incident when some unwanted elements tried to foil the closing ceremony of the Commonwealth games but the attack was foiled by the Indian Intelligence. Speaking about the transformations India has undergone, he said, "On the economic front, we have undergone a rapid transformation which is evident from the fact that the government budget today is much larger than it used to be in the past. Our economy is much more global. Money is no longer an issue." Speaking primarily about the Nehruvian era, Mr. Pal said that India would calculate how much it fell short of capital and then request agencies to provide some money but now "we have enormously large number of sources like FDI and World Bank which are based on totally different set of policies and business environment".

Working Session 1 of the Conference saw deliberations on "**Domestic Imperatives and International Challenges"** by Prof. Bharat Karnad, Research Professor, National Security Studies, Centre for Policy Research New Delhi, and Ashok Malik, senior journalist, while Nidhi Razdan, Senior Anchor and Associate Editor Foreign Affairs NDTV, chaired the session. Prof. Karnad discussed the realm of issues in India's relationship with United States, Pakistan and Iran, and the pressures India faces between domestic factors and externalities. He started with Obama's recent visit and the Indo-US nuclear deal, pointing out that "the very fact India is an energy deficient country seems to make the government of the day reliant on imported reactor technology as a solution. India has developed indigenous technology but lacks investment to progress further along the lines making India a 'guinea pig' for untested technology that in turn hurt our national interests". Commenting on the Indo-Pak relationship, Prof. Karnad, quoting late Major General D. K. Palit, called the Indo-Pak wars as "communal riots with tanks". He went on to talk about India's policy towards Iran highlighting

the enormous stake India has in Iran as an alternative route to access gas, oil and minerals in central Asia, adding that "the more we develop this route, the more pressured Pakistan will feel to give us access to its route." He questioned the hankering by India for membership in Nuclear Suppliers Group when it can sell its own technology outside NSG. Journalist Ashok Malik discussed the domestic factors that shape India's foreign policy and the changing stakeholders in foreign policy discourse. He said that late 1990's is the period India opened to the fact that citizens in a democracy too have views on foreign policy and it became difficult to ignore that "the primary goal of foreign policy is not only to make a good speech, it is to promote the safety, security and prosperity of our people." The four factors, Malik discussed, that help shape foreign policy are role of business as a foreign policy driver, role of media, role of public opinion and the role of states. He opined that it is no more possible to transcend the sensitivities of people in making cross border deals and policies.

Working Session 2 discussed "**India and its Neighbours**", with Ambassador S. K. Lambha, former special envoy of the Prime Minister of India chairing the session and the speakers included Ambassador Jayant Prasad, Non Resident Visiting Scholar at the Centre for Advanced Study of India, University of Pennsylvania USA, Lt. General Syed Ata Hasnain, Senior Fellow Delhi Policy Group, Suhasini Haider, Diplomatic Editor The Hindu and Jayadeva Ranade, President of the Centre for China Analysis and Study. Amb. Jayant Prasad spoke about India's relations with Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal. "Afghanistan has remained in a state of incessant turmoil for the past three decades", he said, adding that the new government is seen by some commentators as a source of change. He went on to talk about maritime boundary issues between India and Bangladesh, issue of suspension of supply of petroleum products between India and Bhutan, and Nepal's unparalleled achievement in terms of peace process in a post conflict situation. Lt. General Ata Hasnain began his address by saying that "without security there is no economics and it is security that drives economics" and went on to talk about India- Pakistan and India- Sri Lanka relations in his address. He said, "Pakistan is an important strategic neighbor to India", arguing that "part of the problem in India- Pakistan Relations is the result of the fact that Pakistan considers itself a part of West Asia, though being an important part of South Asia and this is where the Ideological differences between India and Pakistan emerge." About India's relationship with Sri Lanka, he stated, "Sri Lanka is one of our important neighbours whose importance is often

downplayed. It is a country which did not understand the meaning of military victory. The death of Prabhakaran and the annihilation of Liberation Tigers was just a tactical move and Sri Lanka could not convert it into a strategic move." Expressing optimism over the results of last Lok Sabha elections in India, General Hasnain said, "It has brought about a politically stable government at the centre and this has enabled India to speak from the position of strength." Suhasini Haider, in her address, discussed that "it is not agreeable to believe that we can choose our friends, but not our enemies. We have really done away with the idea that our neighbors can't teach us anything". Her main emphasis was on the fact that India has allowed itself to forget that Pakistan, Bangladesh and Myanmar have a shared history and so it should naturally focus more on its neighbors. "SAARC trade share is dismal", she said, "and the state of connectivity among SAARC countries is poor, despite the shared history". She expressed her optimism over India and its neighbors likely to work on many issues by focusing on soft power, health, labor standards, climate change, tourism, etc. Jayadev Ranade focused primarily on India's relationship with China, highlighting the global situation where India-China relation is seen as the new focal point of power emerging. "The process of recalibrating the India- China relations began when Modi took over as the Prime Minister. He identified the geographic parameters of India's strategic relations and also the areas where India-China strategic interests coincide", he noted. He went on to talk of Chinese wanting India to endorse what they call One Road, One Belt concept and aligning its' Look East policy with the economic policies of China.

Day 2 of the Conference was divided into four technical sessions where papers were presented on various themes linked to India's foreign policy. The first technical session, chaired by Prof Nisar ul Haq of the Department of Political Science JMI, included presentations on "**Continuity and Change: The Kashmir Issue**" by Prof. Sukhwant S. Bindra, Amity Institute of Social Sciences Noida, "**India and Centripetal Processes in the South Asian Region**" by Dr. Valery Tsyban and Dr. Olga Lukash, Institute of World History, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine Kyiv, "**India and Bhutan: Striving for a Better Strategic Partnership**" by Dr. Sarish Sebastian, Faculty of Law JMI, "**Afghan Imbroglio: Can Overlapping of Interests Fix It?"** by Dr. Yaqoob ul Hassan, Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis New Delhi, "**India-Bangladesh Relations: Issues, Problems and** Prospects" by Zubair Malik, Department of Political Science JMI, "**South Asian Regional Cooperation: Indian Leadership Role and Cohesive Strategy**" by

Shahid NP, School of International Studies JNU and "**Afghanistan Post 2014: A Threat or an Opportunity for India**" by Mudassir Fatah, Department of Political Science JMI.

Chaired by Prof Rumki Basu of the Department of Political Science JMI, Technical Session 2 of Day 2 of the Conference had paper presentations by Dr. Sucharita Sengupta, Department of Political Science JMI, on "**Economic Growth in the era of Climate Change: Tracking Business Response to Emissions Reduction**", Dr. Sanjay Sharma, Department of Political Science, Army Cadets College Dehradun on "**China-US Climate Agreement: Can India Stand Firm on Differential Responsibility?**", Ramanuj Hazarika and Bidyut Bora, School of International Studies JNU, on "**Soft Power in Emerging India: Changing Contours of Indian Public Diplomacy and its Role**", Vijender Singh Beniwal, Department of Political Science JMI on "**Indian Foreign Policy – Changing Parameters: Some Reflections**", Priyamvada Mishra, Department of Political Science JMI, on "**Nuclear Neighbourhood and its Impact on Policy Making in India**", Ananya Sharma, School of International Studies JNU, on "**Re-calibrating, Re-Imagining and Re-shaping India's Foreign Policy: Theoretical Engagements, Challenges and New Assessments**" and Zubaer Haque, Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis New Delhi, on "**Assessing Counter-Insurgency Operations of ANSF in the post 2014 scenario**".

Technical Session 3 was chaired by Dr. Pankaj K. Jha, Director (Research), Indian Council of World Affairs New Delhi and paper presenters included Dr. S.R.T.P.S. Raju, Department of Political Science JMI on "**The BRICS Grouping and the Global Economic and Financial Order**", Dr. Olga Lukash, Institute of World History, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine Kyiv, on "**India and China on the Way of Peaceful Co-existence and the New World Order**", K Pamreihor, School of International Studies JNU, on "**India-EU Relations in 21st Century: Prospects and Challenges**" and Saheli Bose, Centre for South Asian Studies JNU, on "**India-ASEAN Relations: A Win-Win Situation".**

The final technical session of the Conference was chaired by Prof. S A M Pasha, Department of Political Science JMI and papers presented included "**India- Saudi Arabia Relations: Gaining Significance**" by Dr. Farah Naaz, Department of Political Science JMI, "**India-US Relations: From Strategic Divergence to Rediscovering of Common** Values" by Sylvia Mishra, ICRIER-Wadhwani Chair in India-US Policy Studies, New Delhi, "**Southeast Asia in India's Foreign Policy**" by Natalia Gorodnia, Institute of World History, National Academy of Sciences

of Ukraine Kyiv, "**India's Policy towards Africa: New Dimensions in 21st Century**" by Dr. Pradipta Mukherjee, Department of Political Science Hiralal Mazumdar Memorial College for Women, Kolkata and "**India-US Trade and Industry Relations: Emerging Trends and Imperatives**" by Surbhi Kapur, India Institute of Foreign Trade New Delhi.

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